

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of April 29, 2009 is respectfully requested.

By this Amendment, claims 45-47, 64, 66 and 68 have been amended, and claims 65, 67 and 69 have been cancelled. Thus, claims 45-64, 66, 68 and 70 are currently pending in the application. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

As an initial matter, it is noted that the drawings have been amended to show a feature disclosed on pages 21-22 of the original specification. In particular, a replacement Fig. 1 has been submitted under separate cover along with this amendment. In this regard, it is noted that replacement Fig. 1 shows a “light-transmitting adhesive layer 18” between the transparent insulation film 10 and the transparent electrode layer 11, as described on pages 21-22 of the original specification. No new matter has been added by the amendment to Fig. 1. Therefore, entry of the replacement Fig. 1 is respectfully requested.

Further, it is noted that revisions have been made to the specification, as identified above. In particular, the specification has been amended such that the light-transmitting adhesive layer between the transparent insulation film 10 and the transparent electrode layer 11 is identified with the reference number 18. No new matter has been added by the revisions. Entry of the amendments to the specification is thus respectfully requested.

On pages 2-3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 45, 46 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tanabe (US 5,871,088). On pages 3-4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 47 and 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanabe in view of Fitzgerald et al. (US 6,858,811). For the reasons discussed below, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims are clearly patentable over the prior art of record.

Amended independent claim 45 recites an EL sheet comprising a counter electrode layer, a dielectric layer, a light-emitting layer, a transparent electrode layer made of an electroconductive polymer, and a sheet base member. Further, claim 45 recites *a light-transmitting adhesive layer disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of the electroconductive polymer and the light-emitting layer*, with the light-transmitting adhesive layer having adhesiveness with respect to the electroconductive polymer, and with the EL sheet having a three-dimensional shape.

Tanabe discloses an EL sheet diaphragm which, as shown in Fig. 2, includes a PET film 3, a transparent electrode layer 4, a light emitting layer 5, a dielectric layer 6, a rear electrode layer 7 and an insulating layer 8.

However, Tanabe does not disclose *a light-transmitting adhesive layer disposed between the transparent electrode layer and the light-emitting layer*, as required by independent claim 45. In this regard, it is noted that on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that column 2, lines 44-48 of Tanabe discloses a light-transmitting adhesive layer disposed between the transparent electrode layer 4 and the light emitting layer 5. However, Tanabe only discloses that the transparent electrode layer 4 is screen-printed on the surface of the PET film 3 and dried, and that the light emitting layer 5 is similarly screen-printed over the transparent electrode layer 4 onto the PET film 3 and dried (see Fig. 5 and column 2, lines 49-67). Therefore, as the light emitting layer 5 of Tanabe is screen-printed and dried directly on the transparent electrode layer 4, Tanabe does not disclose or suggest a light-transmitting adhesive layer disposed between the transparent electrode layer and the light-emitting layer, as required by independent claim 45.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 45 is not anticipated by Tanabe.

Independent claim 47 recites an EL sheet comprising a counter electrode layer, a dielectric layer, a light-emitting layer, a transparent electrode layer made of an electroconductive polymer, and a sheet base member. Further, claim 47 recites *at least one resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of electroconductive polymer and the light-emitting layer*, and that the EL sheet has a three-dimensional shape.

As indicated above, Tanabe discloses an EL sheet diaphragm which, as shown in Fig. 2, includes a PET film 3, a transparent electrode layer 4, a light emitting layer 5, a dielectric layer 6, a rear electrode layer 7 and an insulating layer 8.

However, as acknowledged by the Examiner on page 3 of the Office Action, Tanabe does not disclose *at least one resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane disposed between the transparent*

electrode layer made of electroconductive polymer and the light-emitting layer, as required by independent claim 47.

In this regard, the Examiner cites Fitzgerald as disclosing a resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane. Thus, on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Tanabe to include a resin-base binder.

However, Fitzgerald only discloses a medical switch made of alternating layers of polyester and polyethylene, and does not disclose at least one resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of electroconductive polymer and the light-emitting layer, as required by independent claim 47.

Accordingly, as none of the Tanabe and Fitzgerald references discloses or suggests an EL sheet comprising at least one resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of electroconductive polymer and the light-emitting layer, as required by independent claim 47, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of the Tanabe and Fitzgerald references does not disclose or suggest at least one resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of electroconductive polymer and the light-emitting layer.

Therefore, for the reasons presented above, it is believed apparent that the present invention as recited in independent claim 47 is not disclosed or suggested by the Tanabe reference or the Fitzgerald reference either individually or in combination. Accordingly, a person having ordinary skill in the art would clearly not have modified the Tanabe reference in view of the Fitzgerald reference in such a manner as to result in or otherwise render obvious the present invention of independent claim 47.

Further, it is noted that the additional prior art applied by the Examiner does not cure the defects of the Tanabe and Fitzgerald references as described above. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 45 and 47, as well as claims 46 and 48-64, 66, 68 and 70 which depend therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In addition, the Examiner's attention is directed to the dependent claims which further define the present invention over the prior art. In particular, dependent claim 46 recites *a second light-transmitting adhesive layer disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of the electroconductive polymer and the sheet base member*. In this regard, it is noted that on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that column 2, lines 44-48 of Tanabe discloses a second light-transmitting adhesive layer disposed between the transparent electrode layer 4 and the PET film 3. However, Tanabe only discloses that the transparent electrode layer 4 is screen-printed and dried on the surface of the PET film 3 (see Fig. 5 and column 2, lines 49-58). Therefore, as the transparent electrode layer 4 of Tanabe is screen-printed and dried directly on the PET film 3, Tanabe does not disclose or suggest a second light-transmitting adhesive layer disposed between the transparent electrode layer and the sheet base member, as required by dependent claim 46. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claim 46 is not anticipated by Tanabe.

Further, dependent claim 48 recites *at least one resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of electroconductive polymer and the sheet base member*. In this regard, it is noted that none of the Tanabe and Fitzgerald references discloses or suggests an EL sheet comprising at least one resin-base binder selected from a group consisting of a polyester-base binder, an acrylic binder, a cyanoacrylate-base binder and an ethylene-vinyl acetate-base binder or a synthetic rubber-base binder represented by urethane disposed between the transparent electrode layer made of electroconductive polymer and the sheet base member, as required by dependent claim 48.

In addition, dependent claim 53 recites an EL sheet according to claim 45, with a portion of the EL sheet being formed into a convex shape projecting from a rear side near the counter electrode layer to a top side near the transparent electrode layer, and a core material having a key top shape being *filled into a concave portion of the rear side of the convex shape*. On page 3 of

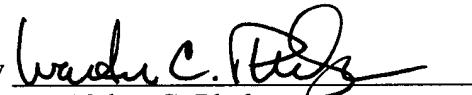
the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Fig. 2 of Tanabe discloses the limitations of claim 53. However, it is noted that Tanabe (including Fig. 2) does not disclose a core material having a key top shape being filled into a concave portion of the EL sheet, as required by claim 53. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Tanabe does not anticipate dependent claim 53.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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